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The sky-high cost of picking up and dropping off at UK airports revealed

The RAC is warning anyone dropping off or picking up friends or relatives from a UK airport this summer not to get stung by parking charges, as new research reveals some airports charge six times more per minute to park than it costs to make a mobile phone call back home while abroad.¹

If you want to be able to leave your car to greet someone at arrivals, London Luton Airport is easily the most expensive for pick-ups – the minimum charge is a staggering £7 for up to 40 minutes. If you're happy staying in your car, you can opt for another car park but it is still the most expensive per minute, with a charge of £3 for a mere ten minutes, and £1 a minute after that.²

Luton is followed by Birmingham when it comes to pricey pick-ups, where it costs £4.70 to park up for up to 60 minutes, with no option to park more cheaply for a shorter period.³ The parking close to Stansted Airport's terminal costs £4.50 for 30 minutes,⁴ while Edinburgh Airport charges £3.90 for just 15 minutes,⁵ equivalent to £0.26 per minute, more than the price of a mobile phone call from Europe back to the UK. London Heathrow charges £3.60 for 30 minutes' parking.⁶

The majority of airports charge for drop-off parking, although six of the UK's 20 busiest airports still offer some free parking provision. Of the bulk that charge however, both London Luton and London Stansted insist on a minimum of £3 for a stay of just ten minutes, while Edinburgh charges £1 for five minutes.

And drivers overstay the minimum time period in airport drop-off zones at their peril. At London Stansted, drivers receive a staggering £50 penalty if

they stay any longer than ten minutes, while both London Luton and East Midlands⁷ charge £1 a minute after waiting ten minutes.

Top most expensive airports for **picking up** friends or relatives

London Luton	£7 for 40 minutes, equivalent to 17.5p per minute
Birmingham	£4.70 for 60 minutes, equivalent to just under 8p per minute
London Stansted	£4.50 for 30 minutes, equivalent to 15p per minute
Edinburgh	£3.90 for 15 minutes, equivalent to 26p per minute
London Heathrow	£3.60 for 30 minutes, equivalent to 12p per minute

Top most expensive airports for **dropping off** friends or relatives

London Luton	£3 for ten minutes, equivalent to 30p per minute
London Stansted	£3 for ten minutes, equivalent to 30p per minute
East Midlands	£2 for ten minutes, equivalent to 20p per minute
Aberdeen	£2 for 15 minutes, equivalent to 13p per minute (note 8)
Edinburgh	£1 for five minutes, equivalent to 20p per minute

While some airports offer lower cost options for drop-off and pick-up parking, these generally mean pre-booking or leaving a car a lot further from the terminal building. In the case of Edinburgh Airport for instance, the drop-off/pick-up zone is free for the first ten minutes but then requires the driver to take a shuttle bus to the terminal to greet or send off a friend or family, meaning they are certain to have to end up paying to park – £3.50 for up to 30 minutes and £5.90 for up to an hour.

RAC head of external affairs Pete Williams said: “While it is true that many airports provide a range of different parking options for drivers depending on how long they expect to stay, motorists need to be aware of the sky-high charges levied by some for parking close to the terminal.

“Drivers are running the risk of incurring some hefty charges if they drive to a pick-up zone to collect somebody whose flight is delayed, or who has to wait a long time at baggage reclaim. In these cases, they are much better finding another, more affordable airport car park. Unfortunately, from our research there will be a trade-off in that other car parks tend to be considerably less convenient and a lot further from the arrivals hall.

“The message to anyone picking up or dropping off at an airport this summer is simple – check the fees carefully before you set out. Overstaying the maximum permitted drop-off time could end up costing as much as a short-haul flight to Europe. If you are concerned you may need to stay longer than the minimum period, then either take plenty of change with you or look for options to park a little further away from the terminal which can save a lot of money.

“The high parking fees at some London airports could perhaps be explained by the fact passengers have more opportunities for getting there by public transport. But for those travelling with a lot of luggage – or when public transport fails or just is not practical – taking the car might be the only feasible option, so drivers need to be careful.”

Notes to Editors

¹ Research of charges at airport car parks that permit a driver to leave their car and go to an airport terminal, quoted on official websites of the UK’s 20 busiest airports sourced from www.caa.co.uk/uploadedFiles/CAA/Content/Standard_Content/Data_and_analysis/Datasets/Airport_stats/Airport_data_2015/Table_10_3_Terminal_Pax_2005_2015.pdf, correct as at 25/7/2016. Cost of mobile phone call within the EU capped at 5p per minute from 30/4/2016 to 15/6/2017; London Luton and London Stansted drop-off rates 30p per minute

² www.london-luton.co.uk/to-and-from-lla/want-to-pick-up-as-close-as-possible

³ www.birminghamairport.co.uk/airport-parking/dropping-off-and-picking-up/

⁴ www.stanstedairport.com/parking/turn-up-and-park/

⁵ www.edinburghairport.com/edinburgh-airport-parking/drop-off-and-pick-up

⁶ www.heathrow.com/transport-and-directions/heathrow-parking/heathrow-short-stay-parking

⁷ www.eastmidlandsairport.com/parking/pick-up-and-drop-off/

⁸ www.aberdeenairport.com/transport-and-directions/dropping-off-at-aberdeen-airport/

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's roadside assistance, insurance, buying a used car, vehicle inspections and checks, legal services or up-to-the-minute traffic and travel information – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of its members and UK motorists at a national level, including advancing levels of road safety, supporting the needs of young drivers and voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring. The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). This is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 30 minutes

- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 92% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



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